BATMAN
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SIX MONTHS AGO:

GIVEN THE DARKNESS, HE MUST BE DEAD.

GIVEN THE COMPANY, IT IS NOT A PLEASANT PLACE.

KILLER'S BANE

SO, THEN...

THIS IS HELL.

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HaCsA ~ nom scan~

IN AUGUST, GOTHAM ENDURED ITS HARDEST RAINFALL ON RECORD, PEAKING AT SIX INCHES OF PRECIPITATION IN A SINGLE HOUR.

THE ENTIRE DELUGE, HOWEVER, SPANNED NINE HOURS OF RELENTLESS DOWNPOUR...

...ALL OF IT INEVITABLY WASHING DOWN SOME SEVEN THOUSAND STORM DRAINS...

...TO BECOME A RAGING CATARACT SQUEEZED THROUGH THE CITY'S SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL SYSTEM.

AT FIRST, SINCE IT WAS WATER THAT KILLED AND BURIED HIM, HE ASSUMED THE DEMONS OF HIS PRIVATE HELL HAD CHOSEN TO INFLICT A MORE IRONIC TORTURE UPON HIS DAMNED SOUL...

BUT THEN SOMETHING MIRACULOUS HAPPENED.

THE WEIGHT WAS LIFTED-- AND HIS CRUSHED SOUL FREED FROM ITS LONG TORMENT...

HE WAS BORNE THROUGH A LONG DARK TUNNEL TOWARD A CIRCLE OF BECKONING LIGHT...

...UNTIL, AT LAST, HE CAME TO BLESSED REST ON SOME STRANGE SHORE OF SALVATION, THE SMOTHERING DARKNESS BANISHED BY CLEANSING LIGHT.

...HIS LIFE FLASHING BEFORE HIM, GOOD DEEDS AND VILE, HORROR AND HOPE IN A RAGING SWIRL...

THIS, THEN... WAS HEAVEN.

FOR SIX MONTHS HE HAS EATEN FAT FILTHY RATS...

...SLEPT LONG BUT FITFULLY, OFTEN IN FEVER...

...AND WRESTLED MIGHTILY WITH THE SAME OLD NIGHTMARES, DIMLY CONCLUDING BY THE THIRD MONTH THAT HE WAS WRONG.

THIS IS HARDLY HEAVEN.

NOW:

THE TORRENTIAL RAINS OF AUGUST HAVE LONG SINCE GIVEN WAY TO SNOW.

HIS TOUGH SKIN, RED EYES, AND BATTERED BRAIN, HOWEVER, BARELY NOTICE.

HE SLEEPS EVEN WHEN AWAKE, NOW, AND HIS NIGHTMARES ARE COMPLETELY ENGROSSING.

WAYNE MANOR:

THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, DR. KINSOLVING? BUT ISN'T THAT AN *UNUSUAL PLACE* FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH--

I AM AN *UNUSUAL* DOCTOR, MR. WAYNE...

THE GARDENS WILL PROVE MORE RESTFUL FOR BOTH OF US--AND CERTAINLY LESS STERILE--THAN MY OFFICE.

SEE YOU AT *TWO*.

KLONG KTANK

SOUNDS... LOUD ONES... AND THIS RAT MUST BE TRULY--

--HUGE.

HIIIHH

NO... NOT A RAT...

A...M-MONSTER!

A CRUDFACE!

NOT RATS AT ALL, BUT PEOPLE -- PEOPLE AND THEIR ENDLESS CRUELTY.

AAAIIIEEE

YAAHH

HE HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN THEM...

BUT NOW, AFTER HIS LONG SLEEP OF NIGHTMARES, HE AWAKENS...

NYAHRRR

WITH A VENGEANCE.

THEN IT COULD BE SOME KIND OF VIRUS, DR. KINSOLVING? EPSTEIN-BARR OR--

GOTHAM BOTANICAL GA

YES--WHATEVER OTHER DOCTORS MAY TELL YOU, MR. WAYNE, SOME VIRUSES ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DETECT, PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE...

BUT IN ANY CASE, YOUR BODY NEEDS REST BEFORE IT CAN ATTACK THE PROBLEM, WHETHER ITS CAUSE IS AN ACTUAL VIRUS OR SOMETHING MORE--

PSYCHOLOGICAL?

YES.

I DON'T FAVOR DRUG TREATMENT AS A RULE, BUT YOUR BODY IS CLEARLY EXHAUSTED AND FOR SOME REASON YOUR MIND REFUSES TO CONCEDE THE FACT. EVEN HYPNOSIS HASN'T WORKED...

I KNOW--NOR MY OWN MEDITATION TECHNIQUES.

SO IF YOU WON'T OR CAN'T *LET YOURSELF REST* -- LET YOUR BODY *RECOVER* -- WE MAY HAVE TO... *PAVE THE WAY*... WITH *SEDATIVES*.

IF THEY PROVE EFFECTIVE, WE CAN THEN REVERT TO MY *HOLISTIC* THERAPY METHODS... BUT ONLY IF YOU'RE WILLING TO START WITH THE SEDATIVES.

WELL, IF THERE'S NO *OTHER* WAY...

BELIEVE ME, I SEE NONE, MR. WAYNE. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY *REASON* FOR YOUR RESISTANCE TO REST? ANY REASON YOU CAN'T *LET UP*?

I GUESS I'M JUST... *DRIVEN*.

FORGIVE ME, BUT AT THIS POINT IT MAY BORDER ON BEING... *OBSESSED*.

I HAVE... TREMENDOUS *RESPONSIBILITIES*.

YES, BUT EVEN FOR A *BRUCE WAYNE*, THIS MUST BE AN *ENORMOUS* BURDEN OF STRESS.

SO MAYBE I'LL JUST... *BURN OUT*.

I DON'T THINK SO. HOWEVER LARGE YOUR PROBLEM IS, YOU MUST HAVE AN EVEN *LARGER* RESERVE OF *INNER STRENGTH*...

YOU'RE CERTAINLY NOT THE FOP SOME PEOPLE *THINK* YOU ARE.

IN FACT, I'M BEGINNING TO THINK I COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM YOU.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

GIVEN YOUR CONDITION, ANY NORMAL PERSON WOULD HAVE SNAPPED BY NOW.

MAYBE I HAVE.

IF SO, YOU'VE DONE IT WITH APLOMB AND GRACE -- SEEKING TREATMENT RATHER THAN TAKING AN ASSAULT RIFLE INTO SOME SHOPPING MALL.

I HATE GUNS.

IS THERE... ANYTHING I SHOULD KNOW?

MY PARENTS... THEY WERE MURDERED ... WHEN I WAS... YOUNG.

THAT'S RIGHT... I...I FORGOT...

YOU'RE AWARE OF MY BACK-GROUND?

YOU ARE ONE OF GOTHAM'S MORE PROMINENT CITIZENS, MR. WAYNE...

I DON'T RECALL ALL THE DETAILS, BUT SOME WRITER DID A FEATURE ARTICLE ON YOU A FEW YEARS BACK...

VICKI VALE.

A GOOD WRITER-- SHE GOT BENEATH THE SURFACE FACTS.

I REMEMBER FEELING AS IF I ACTUALLY KNEW THE SUBJECT OF THE PIECE... IF SHE WAS ACCURATE ABOUT YOU, ANYWAY.

SHE WAS.

THEN IF THE SEDATIVES ARE EFFECTIVE, I THINK WE SHOULD PICK UP FROM THERE... WITH YOUR PARENTS.

I'M NOT SURE I COULD DO THAT... AND BESIDES, ISN'T THAT WHAT A PSYCHIATRIST WOULD--

I'VE TOLD YOU, MR. WAYNE-- IF WE'RE GOING TO WORK TOGETHER TO HEAL YOU, I'M GOING TO SHATTER YOUR PRECONCEPTIONS IN THE PROCESS...

EXIT

YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING OF ME AS A TRADITIONAL DOCTOR WHO BELIEVES IN SOME SEPARATION OF THE MIND AND BODY.

ALL RIGHT, BUT--

AT THIS POINT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, YOU NEED SOMEONE-- SOMEONE WHO GENUINELY CARES-- AND YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE IN ME AS A PERSON, NOT JUST A DOCTOR.

I...

HUSH-- YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT.

YOU'VE GOT TO TRUST ME WITH THE VERY THING THAT BINDS YOUR BODY AND MIND --TRUST ME WITH YOUR SOUL.

YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE THAT I'M HERE FOR YOU-- NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

I... ALL RIGHT, DR. KINSOLVING... I DO BELIEVE IN YOU.

GOOD. NOW GO STRAIGHT HOME TO BED... AND WHEN YOU WAKE UP, START CALLING ME SHONDRA.

THREE HOURS LATER:

--TEAR GAS, AS YOU CAN VIVIDLY SEE, HAS SEEMINGLY HAD NO EFFECT OTHER THAN TO FURTHER ANGER HIM...

... AND MAYORAL CANDIDATE ARMAND KROL HAS JUST ISSUED A STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE POLICE FOR NOT FIRING ON THE RAMPAGING KILLER CROC.

WHO IS HE, BIRD?

KILLER CROC? HE'S A FREAK, BANE -- WITH THE MOTHER OF ALL SKIN PROBLEMS...

HIS CONDITION ALSO MAKES HIM REAL STRONG -- USED TO WRESTLE ALLIGATORS -- BEFORE HE DECIDED TO BECOME GOTHAM'S NEW CRIMELORD.

HIM?

YEAH...

... BUT THIS WAS BEFORE HE WENT WHACKO LIKE HE IS NOW.

THEN HE TRIED TO DO... WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO.

WHAT HAPPENED?

HE OFFED THE BIG MAN AT THE TIME-- ANOTHER FREAK, CALLED THE SQUID-- BUT THE MOOKS IN TOWN REFUSED TO BOW DOWN...

THAT'S WHEN KILLER CROC GOT THE BRIGHT IDEA OF PROVING HIS WORTHINESS AS A LEADER-- BY TAKING OUT THE BATMAN.

CAME REAL CLOSE, TOO...

THEN MAYBE IT'S TIME TO PROVE MY WORTHINESS...

...BY TAKING HIM OUT.

--APPARENTLY MAKING HIS WAY INTO MIDTOWN GOTHAM NOW, WITH THE POLICE STILL KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE...

BATMAN'S GOTTA RESPOND TO THIS.

I TOLD YOU, TIMOTHY-- HE'S JUST BEGUN A WEEK'S TREATMENT OF SEDATIVES...

"...AND WHILE WE BOTH KNOW HE COULD FIGHT HIS WAY THROUGH ANYTHING TO GET OUT OF THAT BED--

"--DOING SO NOW WOULD BE THE WORST THING POSSIBLE."

BUT FAILING TO SHOW AGAINST KILLER CROC IS LIKE AN OPEN INVITATION TO ALL THE WEIRD ONES.

I MEAN, CAN YOU IMAGINE-- [redacted] WITHOUT THE BATMAN?

POINT TAKEN, LAD, AND ONE OFTEN CITED BY THE MASTER HIMSELF...

...WHICH IS ONE OF THE [redacted] HE'S SO DRIVEN.

AND SO EXHAUSTED.

INDEED, BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT'S TO BE DONE ABOUT IT. AFTER ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE BATMAN...

YEAH... BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THAT.

EH--? WHAT ARE YOU--

I'VE GOT IT, ALFIE -- AND IT'S BRILLIANT!

--POLICE HAVE FINALLY OPENED FIRE HERE IN THE EDEN PARK SECTION, BUT IT LOOKS AS IF KILLER CROC MAY WELL MAKE AN ESCAPE THROUGH THE SEWER SYSTEM...

GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE A FELLOW EVENING NEWS FAN.

EH--?

ROBIN! AS YOU CAN SEE, I ANTICIPATED YOU MIGHT CALL...

YOU ANTICIPATED RIGHT, PAUL, OLE BUDDY...

HERE-- IT'S TIME TO FLY THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES.

WHAT IS THIS? I AM ALREADY WEARING MY CDS--

YEAH, BUT TONIGHT, PAUL, YOU ADD A CAPE...

...AND EARS.

WHA--?

MORE TRAINING ON THE FLY-- BUT THIS TIME I'M GONNA PLAY THE PUPIL, AND YOU'RE GONNA SEEM LIKE THE TEACHER.

ONE THING, BANE-- THIS "KILLER CROC" MAY ATTRACT SOMEONE ELSE-- SUCH AS THE BATMAN.

I'M COUNTING ON IT, TROGG.

KRANGK

PEOPLE AGAIN-- LOTS OF THEM.

WHAT ARE YOU STARIN' AT?!

KTASH

LOUSY FREAKS!

SMAK

RUNCH

STINKIN' PEOPLE!!

HN

HELLP

EEEEEEE

YAAHHH

BRAKT

--REPORTS OF KILLER CROC REAPPEARING INSIDE THE EDEN PARK MALL. POLICE ARE RUSHING TO THE SCENE...

WEARIN' YOUR RADIO EARPIECE, PAUL?

YES-- I HEARD.

THEN THAT'S OUR CUE!

BANE--? THIS IS BIRD--HE'S AT THE EDEN PARK MALL, ON--

I HAVE STUDIED THE MAPS.

N-NO... MOTHER... FATHER...

...SH-SHONDRA...

GO ON, YA FILTHY PEOPLE!

RUN! RUN LIKE RATS!!

BWANG

HEY! COME BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T GO IN--

GET YOUR EYES CHECKED, ERNIE...

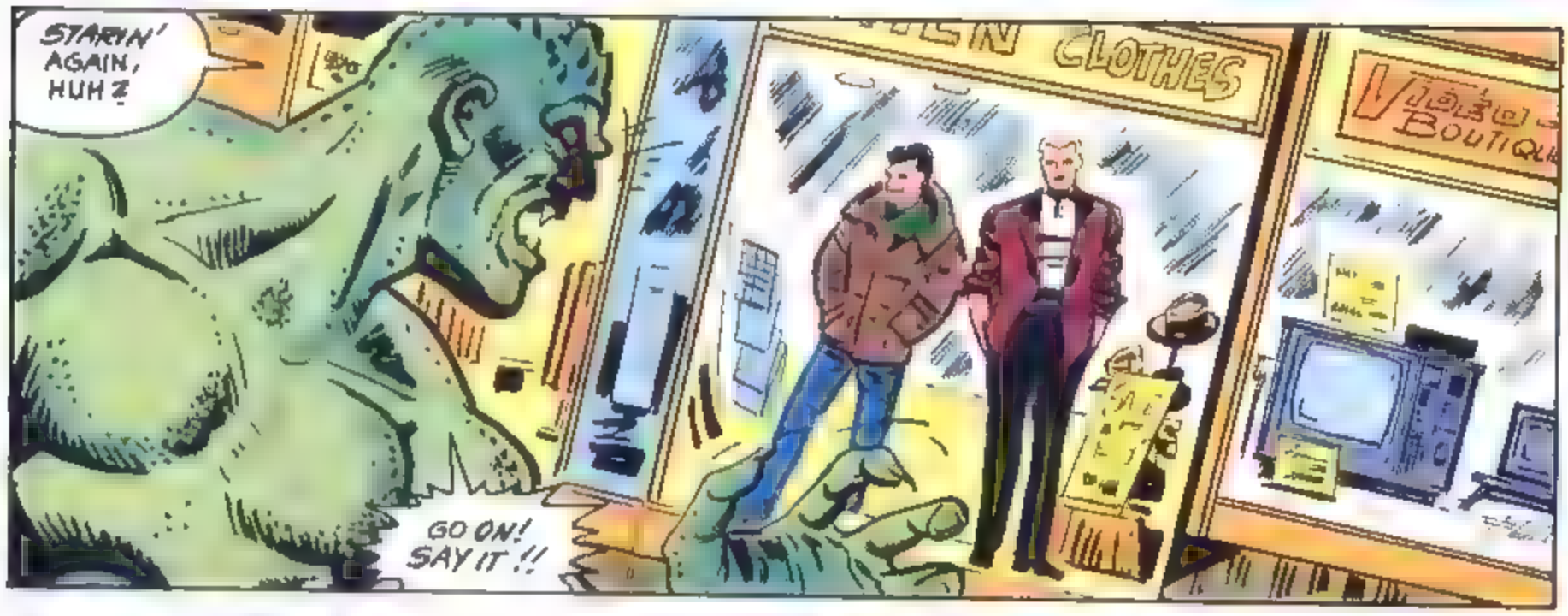
THAT'S THE BATMAN-- AND HIS JUNIOR PARTNER.

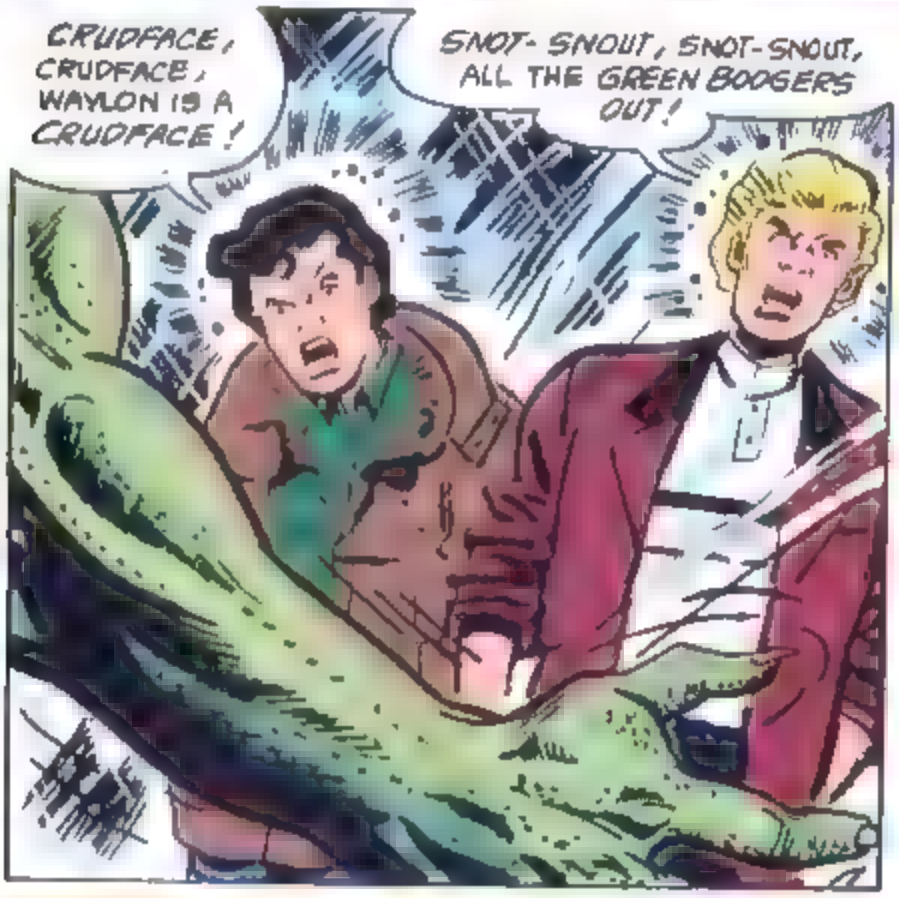
OH.

ABOUT TIME...

CHUFF

RAWK


STARIN' AGAIN, HUH?
CLOTHES
GO ON! SAY IT!!


CRUDFACE, CRUDFACE, WAYLON IS A CRUDFACE!
SNOT-SNOUT, SNOT-SNOUT, ALL THE GREEN BOOGERS OUT!

NYAAAHH
BRAC

STUMP
CRUNK

YOU... THE BAT-DEMON AGAIN...
I WRESTLE YOU... IN MY NIGHTMARES.
REMEMBER-- HE'S TOO STRONG --STAY OUT OF HIS REACH...

RUUUAHH

PRUNCT

YOU DIE, FREAK!

SWUT

SNK

SNK

BUP

UNPH!

PHOOM

WUNT

AHN--! HOLD STILL! JUST LEMME GET MY HANDS ON YA!

CHUP

CAN'T *HURT* HIM -- HIS SKIN IS *TOO TOUGH!*

THAPP

KEEP UP THE *LONG-RANGE ATTACK!*

SHUDT

EH--?

WHO IS--

NO!! LOOK OUT!!

HAH! NOW I GOT YA--JUST LIKE A *SWAMP 'GATOR*-- BUT NOT *HALF* AS *SLIPPERY!*

HUUUAUHH

POUND ALL YA WANT, FREAK!

TUD TUD TUD

I GOT REAL THICK SKIN...

CRUD-FACE, SNOT-SNOUT!

...AND ONLY NAMES CAN HURT ME!

SHUMPT

WUMP

AN' WHO'RE YOU--?

TONIGHT?

TONIGHT, I'M YOUR BANE...

TEK

SSHHHH

...FUELED BY VENOM.

SO YA GOT SOME BUTTON, BLOWS YA UP LIKE A BALLOON.

I AIN'T--

SAPT

--IMPRESSED?

HE'S NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE--NO FEAR IN HIM--MORE LIKE THE BAT-DEMON OF HIS NIGHTMARES...

NNNGHH

...BUT STRONGER...

YAAIIIEEEE

KRAKT

...MUCH STRONGER.

BOUTIQUE

YOU ALL RIGHT..?

C-CATCH... MY B-BREATH...

THAT DUDE MIGHT BE EVERYONE'S BANE...

BREATHE SLOW AND DEEP.

T-TRYING... TO.

YOU... BROKE... MY... ARM!

SKRAKT

YOU'RE TOO UGLY TO HIT.

CHUMPT

TOYS

DOLL

SWUKT

STUFF...

...YOU.

THE TOY STORE SALE

I'M BANE...

UH OH.

...BUT YOU...

...YOU'RE NOT THE BATMAN.

SHEE-YEW...

THIS WAY-- YOU DON'T WANNA SEE THE ARMS THAT ALMOST CRUSHED YOU...

T-TOMORROW ...WITH OR WITHOUT YOU...MY T-TRAINING... STARTS FOR R-REAL.

MAYBE SO... BUT LIKE ALFRED SAYS...

"THERE'S ONLY ONE BATMAN."

P-PLEASE...

...H-HELP ME.

END

BAT-SIGNALS

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Dear Batman People,

BATMAN #483. All right!!! A complete Batman story in one issue! I didn't think today's comic book writers knew how to do one of those anymore. And the story turns out to be good, too—exceptionally good, in my opinion. Anyway, I hope there is going to be a trend to complete stories in single issues, and not necessarily just in the Batman titles.

Laney Loftin
Monroe, Louisiana

We like to think that a combination of single and multi-part stories adds a nice bit of variety to the Bat-titles, and we try not to overdo either. Let us know how we're doing.

Dear Batmen,

BATMAN #483 was the best.' The absolute best. Mr. Moench gave us an interesting story, one that kept me interested throughout the entire issue. That was a great story. The cover was an eye-catching wonder, and I actually found myself not complaining about Mr. Aparo's art (although I'm still trying to find out what he has done to Tim's hair?). I tuned in for a good issue, and you know what?

Chicken butt!

Oh god, I'm so sorry. I couldn't help it. I'm sorry.

Thanks (I think).
The Great Buck
W. Carrollton, Ohio

P.S. I meant to say that I got a good issue. Sorry.

Hmm. You're welcome, I guess. Suburbia can really get to you, can't it?

Yo, Bat-Dudes,

Just wrote to tell you what a great job you're doing. I haven't missed an issue since April of 1991.

Until Batman changes his colors to pink and purple, make mine DC!!!

Ever Batty,
Andy Sallee
Milton, Indiana

Done.

Dear Bat-People,

Has Batman ever thought of coming here to Melbourne? Here we have 23 different streets named after Batman, two parks (one in the city), a post office and a railway station all named after Batman. Just thought you'd like to know that.

Yours sincerely,
Australian Comic Club
c/o Chris J. Scull
Thomastown, Victoria
Australia

Thanks for the tip, Chris. If Batman ever gets deported for any reason, I'm sure Melbourne will be right at the top of the list of new locations for the Batcave.

Dear Editor,

I only glanced at the latest issue of BATMAN for a few seconds and made some very quick judgments about "Crash & Burn" without even reading the story. I had thought to myself, "Not Jim Aparo again!" Before you assemble the tar-and-feather squad please let me explain. I AM NOT AN ART CRITIC! I read comics mostly for the storylines, not for the artwork. Sometimes, I see some art I think is very well done and I will stop to admire it, but most of the time I'm happy with any artwork that does not distract from the story. I've read comics for over 25 years and have all of those old BRAVE AND THE BOLDs done by Jim way back when. The art was very good in a lot of them, but not all of them. Jim did excellent work on the more dramatic tales, but those books that were meant to be lighter in tone did not suit his art style. I felt that Jim did not really change his style for any story.

I went to bed that night without reading the story, and could not fall asleep. My thoughts always came back to those horrible thoughts I had about Jim's art abilities. Who was I to judge and condemn?—especially since I hadn't read this latest endeavor yet. Of course, I got out of bed in those wee hours of the morning and found said copy of "Crash & Burn" and read it. What can I say? The story was excellent! I was totally captured by the words and pictures! The author told a bold tale about two idiots who cared about nobody but themselves. Sadly, as I remember from one of the Batman letter columns recently, a fan had pointed out that these types of villains are scarier than all of the Jokers or Penguins, etc. put together because we see them too often in our daily news. The art complements the story to perfection. Jim took chances with the visual storytelling and left the reader feeling like it could have been him or someone they knew and loved lying dead on a bank floor.

All I can say is that I'm sorry I prejudged Jim's work and that it won't happen again. After giving this issue the chance it deserved, I hope Jim stays as artist for at least as long as his run on THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD.

James McCane
Independence, Kentucky

That makes two of us, James. It takes a brave man to admit when he is absolutely, completely, totally and inexcusably wrong, and I salute you for seeing the error of your ways.

Dear Denny and Scott,

Doug Moench is back with a vengeance! The story of Crash & Burn was a rather simple one, but what Doug did with it was quite enjoyable. This illustrates how much input a writer has after the plot has been developed.

We're introduced to two psychotic, masochistic(?) individuals set on a path of destruction. We and they know that Gotham and Batman loom in their future, yet they continue. Why? Was it fate? Was it stupidity? Or was it a desire to be taken down by their dark sides, metaphorically in the form of Batman but in actuality in themselves. While Batman wasn't a key player in the story, his presence was felt throughout. We didn't need to see or feel what he was doing every panel—his presence was absolute. Over the past several years, the Batman has been the star of this magazine (his name *is* on the cover, after all), but what I'd enjoy seeing more of is how others view Batman. His thoughts, feelings, and methodology have been covered in depth lately. Let's see how he appears to others, how his enigmatic self works. It's been quite a while since we've seen this side of Batman, but I think it's a side Doug has the capacity to bring out.

Oh, and that Aparo guy—keep him around. I think he's got a future with DC.

Mark Lucas
Los Angeles, California

If only Jim would get serious about his work and really apply himself...

Dear Scott,

"Crash & Burn, a Love Story"— it stunk! I hated it!

Thank you for your time.

Scum
Gadsen, Alabama

Your parents certainly named you well.

And this just in...

Hey, Bill—

Re BATMAN: SWORD OF AZRAEL #1.

QUESADA IS GOD!!!

Uncle Elvis
Norwalk, Connecticut

I thought that was Clapton...

Dear Bat People,

I just finished reading BATMAN #483. Catchy cover. It definitely got my attention. I think Crash & Burn are good, good characters, but I thought that they would lead to even bigger crimes. Also, what did they do with all that money they took from the bank anyway?

On page 8, why is Commissioner Gordon making the Flash symbol with the paper clips?

Anyway, the artwork was great and the story was great! I hope we see more of Crash & Burn in the future.

Dobs
Rockland, Ontario
Canada

P.S. I've missed the Return of Scarface, which made me very depressed... Personally, I think Vicki should have figured it out already. I'm also getting tired of Vicki. I think that it's time for a change. Let them go their separate ways.

Crash & Burn spent some of the money, Dobs, but most was just left in the car when they crashed. And the Commissioner wasn't making the Flash symbol, he was just bending the paper clip into different shapes. It's this little nervous tic he has, and it can drive you nuts after a while.

Dear Batpeople,

"Crash & Burn" was another great Batman story. I hope we will see more of these two in the future. But that is not why I am writing this letter. Batman has meant more to me than just the dark, caped crusader out to satisfy his sense of justice.

You see, when I was in high school my family fell apart. My father left our home in a way that tore it to pieces. I was never really into comics except for an occasional one here and there. During this time I bought a DETECTIVE COMICS featuring the Mud Pack (the Clayfaces). Since then I have been hooked.

Reading about Batman helped take me away to another place. When there was turmoil in the house it helped ease things; it helped me get away. I can understand why Bruce Wayne becomes the Batman. He uses the Batman to take out his frustrations and anger. While this is definitely not the route I can take, it has helped me.

I am now in college and my problems are behind me. While I do sometimes get teased by my friends about reading Batman, it still takes me to that place. This is why I read Batman. I would like to thank you for keeping the legend of the Batman alive.

Timothy P. Landry

Thanks for letting us know we're doing okay, Timothy.

Dear Scott, Doug, Jim and crew,

BATMAN #483, "Crash & Burn"—what a terrific story! Telling it from the voice of one of the baddies was a good idea. This really was a love story in its own strange way. I liked this better than a lot of the stuff that came out this week and, as a Batman story, it is one of the better ones this year as far as a one-issue story goes. I wish we could have more stories like this one. Mr. Aparo's art fit this story perfectly. Mr. Moench should be proud of the work he did on this one. It's a beaut! I repeat, this was one of the best I have seen in a while. A LONG while! Until next time...

Carl Pietrantonio
Laredo, Texas

And it only gets better from here.

OVER IN ROBIN: Robin and the Huntress are up against the KGBeast, who's up against King Snake and Lynx and the Ghost Dragons, who's still out to get Robin, but his guidance counselor thinks Bruce is beating up on Robin and his father's getting a bit too curious and, well, just pick up ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS #4 by Chuck Dixon, Tom Lyle and Bob Smith, on sale now.

OVER IN SHADOW: It's the third part of "Misfits." Killer Moth, Calendar Man and Catman have kidnapped Mayor Krol, Com-missioner Gordon and millionaire Bruce Wayne. They've got the ransom money, but hey, it's easier to kill them anyway. Can our boy Robin possibly get there in time? And just where is "there"? Find out in SHADOW OF THE BAT #9, by Alan Grant and Tim Sale, on sale now.

OVER IN DETECTIVE: It's the second part of "The General." He's uniting the gangs of Gotham and he's primed to take on the police force and their champion, the Batman. With the Dark Knight in less than top form, he just may be able to do it. It all happens in DETECTIVE COMICS #645, by our own Chuck Dixon, Michael Netzer and

NEXT ISSUE: It's the long-awaited return of the Riddler! He's back and he's trickier than ever. Batman can't figure out his riddle...but Bane can. And when Bane gets hold of him...well, just be here in thirty days for BATMAN #490, by Doug Moench and Jim Aparo. 'Kay?

—Scott Peterson
what does this look like,
the beach?

Cover pencilled by Travis Charest, inked by Ray McCarthy and colored by Bob Le Rose.

BATMAN
VENGEANCE OF BANE
STILL ON SALE
THAT IS STRANGE. A CREATURE CLOAKED IN NIGHTMARE. A FIGURE OF TERROR IN A CITY OF TERROR.
AND YET YOU WILL NOT BREAK THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.
YOU WILL KNOW MY NAME ONE DAY.
AND ON THAT DAY YOU WILL BEG FOR MERCY.